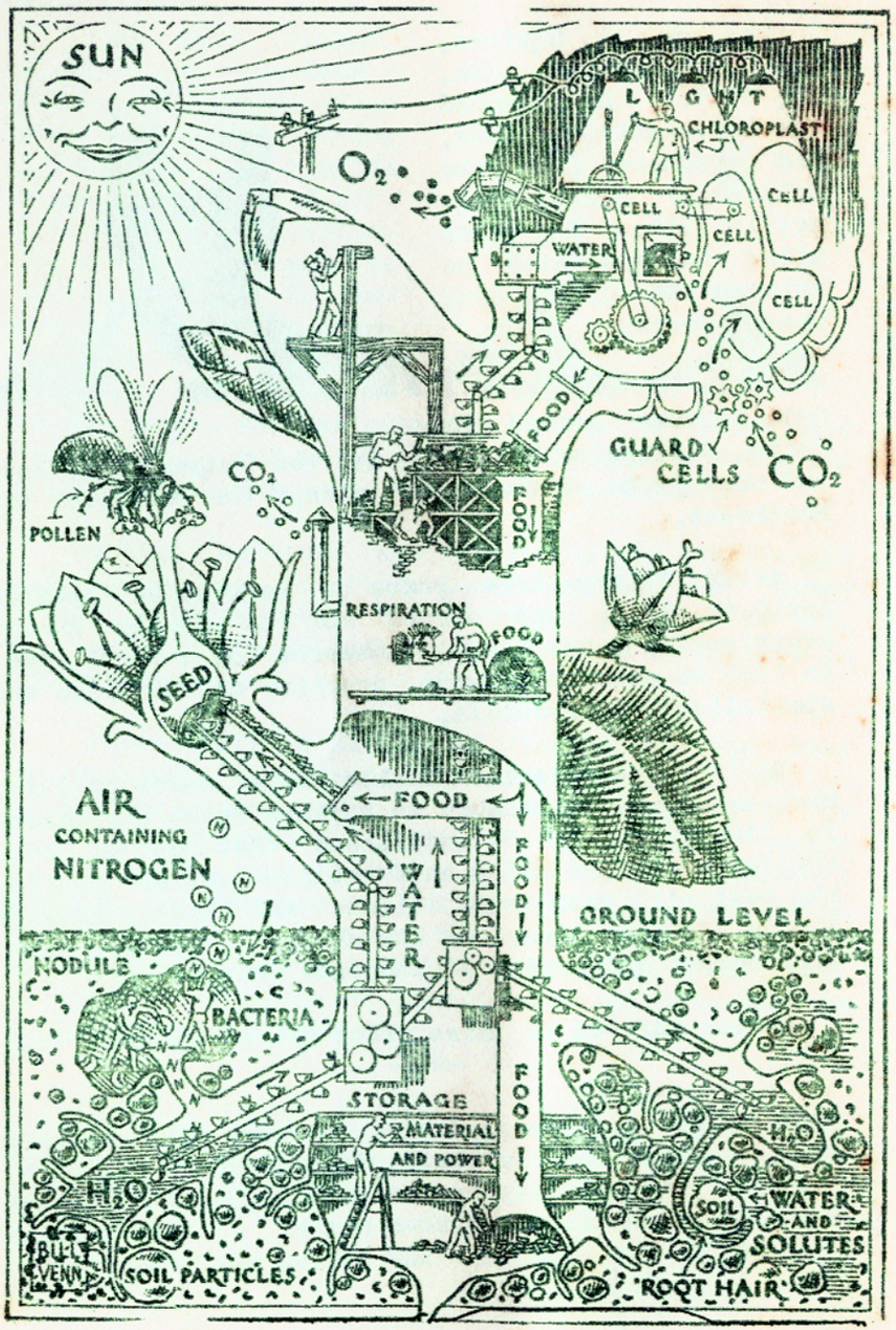

HOW A PLANT FUNCTIONS

The diagram to the left graphically illustrates the principal processes of every flowering plant. It shows the absorption of water and minerals by the root hairs from the soil. These essential solutions move along the roots, up the stems and into the branches, leaves and flowers. Another essential food-building material, carbon dioxide, is absorbed from the air by the leaves.

The power that drives the food-making apparatus is sun light. When all these elements are brought together in the correct proportions, the food-making factory operates at peak efficiency.

During the process, oxygen is given off into the air. Then the food is sent from the leaves back into the stems, flowers, seeds and roots. The food is used to build the body of the plant, supply energy for the work of respiration, and the excess food is stored as sugar, starch, fats and proteins in the roots and bulbs of some plants.

Other functions of this process is the gathering of nitrogen from the air by bacteria in nodules formed on the roots of beans, alfalfa and other legumes; the development of flowers and seeds, pollination by insects, etc.

By these functions green plants feed not only themselves but the whole animal kingdom, including man.